

Captain David Stearns House  
3 Gardiner Street  
Richmond  
Sagadahoc County  
Maine

HABS No. ME-142

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ME  
12-RICH  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. ME-142

## CAPTAIN DAVID STEARNS HOUSE

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Location: 3 Gardiner Street (north side between Pleasant and Front Streets), Richmond, Sagadahoc County, Maine.

Present Owner: Michael Lewaschow and Efrosina Lewaschow.

Present Occupant: Michael Lewaschow and his wife, Efrosina Lewaschow.

Present Use: Dwelling.

Statement of Significance: The Captain David Stearns House is an example of Richmond, Maine's distinctive and varied wooden Greek Revival temple style homes. Many of these, including the Stearns House, were built for sea captains and shipbuilders during the town's flourishing two decades before the Civil War. The Stearns House is of special architectural interest because of its carved lotus leaf capitals, which reflect the influence of the Egyptian Revival.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is the office of the Registrar of Deeds Sagadahoc County.

1851 Deed April 15, 1851 recorded May 24, 1851 in Book 34 of the Western District of Lincoln County, page 331  
Elbridge Higgins  
to  
David Stearns

Deed April 16, 1851 recorded May 24, 1851 in Book 34 of the Western District of Lincoln County, page 333  
James Carney, Jr.  
to  
David Stearns

1864 Deed February 20, 1864 recorded August 6, 1866 in Book 29 page 19

David Stearns  
to  
Helen M. Libby, wife of Joshua Libby

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1885 Deed May 8, 1885 recorded May 9, 1885 in Book  
69 page 114  
Helen M. Libby  
to  
Margaret Lemont, wife of Isaac Lemont

1899 Deed November 27, 1899 recorded December 16,  
1899 in Book 95 page 340  
Margaret Lemont  
to  
Amesbury S. Alexander

1908 Deed June 4, 1908 recorded July 25, 1908 in  
Book 113 page 574  
Amesbury S. Alexander  
to  
Elizabeth B. (P.) Alexander, wife of Amesbury S.  
Alexander

1931 Deed December 18, 1931 recorded November 5, 1936  
in Book 197 page 215  
Elizabeth P. Alexander  
to  
Charles A. Alexander

1946 Deed April 15, 1946 recorded April 16, 1946  
in Book 242 page 522  
Charles A. Alexander  
to  
Ernest Dean Foss

1955 Deed August 31, 1955 recorded September 9, 1955  
in Book 287 page 477  
Ernest Dean Foss and Helen S. Foss  
to  
Michael Lewaschow and Tamara Lewaschow

1967 Deed June 28, 1967 recorded July 14, 1967 in  
Book 355 page 932  
Michael Lewaschow  
to  
Michael Lewaschow and Efrosina Lewaschow

2. Date of erection: Built circa 1851-55. Stearns purchased the two lots which comprise the site in the spring of 1851. The house appears on Map of the Town

of Richmond, Sagadahoc Co., Maine from actual survey  
by D. S. Osborn, Civil Engineer, published by E. M.  
Woodford, Philadelphia, 1855.

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3. Architect, builder, suppliers, etc.: Unknown.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: None.
5. Alterations and additions: No significant alterations to the house. Front and rear gable windows each appear to have had diamond panes installed at the turn-of-the-century. One story ell added to original two story one.
6. Important old views: Southeast view showing house and ell taken circa 1935 by Ernest Howe. Photograph in possession of Mrs. Earl Cronk, 55 Main Street, Richmond, Maine 04357

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Residence of Richmond shipmaster, Captain David Stearns, between circa 1851-55 and 1864.

C. Supplemental Material:

Captain David Stearns was born in Dresden, Maine, an adjoining town to Richmond, on September 23, 1803 and died there on December 17, 1867. He married Lavinia Reed in 1827, and they had four children in Dresden, David, Sarah, Helen, and Esther. Mrs. Stearns died in 1851. For part of his career, Captain Stearns was master of the Brig Richmond, which was built there in 1846 and weighed 149.15 tons.

D. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources: Sagadahoc County Registry of Deeds, Sagadahoc County Courthouse, High Street, Bath, Maine 04530.
2. Secondary and published sources:

Allen, Charles E. History of Dresden. Augusta: Maine State Library, 1931.

Typescript of Dresden, Maine, Cemetery Records, Maine Historical Society, 485 Congress Street, Portland, Maine 04101.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

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A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Captain David Stearns House, built between 1851 and 1855, is a wooden temple style Greek Revival house of two-and-a-half stories. Its roof overhangs on the west, south, and east sides of the dwelling as well as on the south side of the ell. The overhang is supported by hexagonal pillars with carved lotus leaf capitals which reflect the influence of the Egyptian Revival.
2. Condition of fabric: A few later minor alterations, well-maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: House 28'-8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 35'-1", modified rectangular plan, two-and-a-half stories, three-bay facade; ell 18'-6" x 21', modified rectangular plan, two-and-a-half stories, three-bay facade.
2. Foundations: Granite.
3. Wall construction: White clapboards.
4. Framing: Standard light frame construction with wooden studs, joists, and rafters.
5. Porches: Front (south) porch, narrow walk on east side, and ell front (south) porch all located under roof overhang.
6. Chimneys: Three narrow rectangular brick chimneys with east-west orientations. The two on the main house stand on the west side of the roof slightly below the gable peak. The front (south) chimney has been shortened almost to the roof, while the rear (north) chimney retains its original height and tapered top. The third chimney, located on the ell, stands on the north side of the roof slightly below the gable peak. It retains its original height and tapered top.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Main doorway and door at southeast corner of house. Doorway has characteristic Greek Revival treatment of a modified triangular pediment and sidelights. Ell doorway and door

comprise a slightly projecting bay which is located at southeast corner of ell. Their design is virtually identical to the doorway and door on the main house.

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- b. Windows and shutters: Main house: Front (south) wall, first story has two windows with four-over-four panes, modified triangular pediments above, and shutters on either side; second story has three windows with two-over-two panes and shutters on either side; gable story has double window with diamond panes and modified triangular pediment above. West wall, first story has two windows with four-over-four panes, modified triangular pediments above, and shutters on either side; second story has two windows with two-over-two panes and shutters on either side. Rear (north) wall, first story has four windows with four-over-four panes and modified triangular pediments above; second story has three windows with two-over-two panes; gable story has double window with diamond panes and modified triangular pediment above. East wall, second story has one window with two-over-two panes and shutters on either side. Ell: Front (south) wall, first story has two windows with two-over-two panes, modified triangulars above, and shutters on either side; second story has two windows with two-over-two panes and shutters on either side. East wall, first story has one window with two-over-two panes.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Main house, gable roof, ridge running north-south. Covering, asphalt shingles. Ell, gable roof, ridge running east-west. Covering, asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Boxed cornices, eaves overhang second floor walls.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: Full basement under house and ell.
- b. First floor: Main house, entrance hall begins at southeast corner and runs three-quarters of the

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house along east wall; two large rooms on the west side, one at southwest corner and other at northwest corner, connected by double doors; one small room to the east of the large rear room and behind the entrance hall (part of this small room projects one bay out and one bay across the rear (north) wall). Ell, entrance hall begins at southeast corner and runs three-quarters of the ell along east wall; one large room to west of entrance hall.

- c. Second floor: Main house, small room in southeast corner, hall behind it on east wall of house, two large rooms on west side, one at southwest corner and other at northwest corner; small room to the east of the large rear room and behind the hall. Ell, hall begins at southeast corner and runs entire length of ell along east wall, one large room to west of hall.
  - d. Attic: Large unfinished space in both house and ell.
2. Stairways: House, basement stairs under main staircase ascend straight along east wall from basement to first floor; main staircase in entrance hall ascends straight along east wall from first to second floor (temporarily closed at second floor level to divide owners' first floor living quarters from second floor rented apartment). Access to attic gained by trap door in second floor hall ceiling. Ell, staircase in entrance hall ascends straight along east wall from first to second floor.
  3. Flooring: Narrow wooden strips, varnished.
  4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls, wallpaper on plaster in both house and ell. House ceilings, first floor has pressed tin ceilings and cornices; second floor has pressed tin ceilings and cornices in hall and small southeast corner room, remainder is plastered. Ell ceilings, first and second floors have pressed tin ceilings and cornices.
  5. Doorways and doors: Doorways and doors throughout most of the house and ell are of plain Greek Revival design. The two large rooms on the west side of the main house are connected by double doors. These doors have two short vertical panels below and two long vertical panels above. Other doors in the house and ell repeat this style. (For decorative doorway treatment, see "Decorative features and trim" below.)

6. Decorative features and trim: The turn-of-the-century pressed tin ceilings and cornices are the most decorative interior features of the house and ell. The Greek Revival woodwork is plain with the exception of one window molding in the small rear room, main house, and the window and door moldings of the second floor ell room. These windows and doors are each surrounded by a heavy molding with slightly splayed sides, which resembles designs illustrated in the works of Minard Lafever.
7. Notable hardware: None.
8. Lighting: Modern electrical fixtures.
9. Heating: The four large rooms in the house and the two in the ell each have a thin chimney running through them, to which a stove was probably attached originally. There is no evidence of fireplaces. Currently, the first floor (the owners' quarters) is heated by oil-fired hot air, while the second floor is apparently heated by oil or electric space heaters when it is rented.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: House is situated on gradually rising hillside and faces south toward Gardiner Street in residential neighborhood near Richmond's riverfront.
2. Enclosures: Wooden fence encloses yard in front (south) of house and ell on three sides.
3. Outbuildings: Wooden clapboarded one-car garage stands on northeast corner of lot.
4. Walks: Main walk from near Gardiner Street to front (south) porch of house has a granite step, then a series of cement squares, and, finally, a granite step in front of the porch. Walk from near Gardiner Street to front (south) porch of ell has three granite steps, then a series of cement squares, and, finally, two granite steps in front of the porch.
5. Landscaping: Large trees and shrubbery are arranged informally.

Prepared by Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr.  
September 1971